

NSC BRIEFING

16 September 1958

BACKGROUND PIECE ON IRAN

(This piece should be read in conjunction with SNIE 34-58)

1. The prospects for stability of the regime in Iran have not improved during the past month although surface tensions have apparently eased.
 - A. The Shah is continuing his role of absolute ruler, thus inviting efforts to overthrow him.
 - B. He cannot depend on the loyalty of the Army.
 1. The recent attempted frameup of a gendarmerie colonel, apparently sponsored by the intelligence chief of the general staff (General Ali Kiz), may have been aimed at purging suspected supporters of former G-2 General Gharani, currently under sentence for conspiring against the regime.
 2. Junior officers continue to be dissatisfied with the existing order of things.

C. Plotting also continues among intellectuals as well as the semi-literates in Tehran. All this is aimed at establishing a republic whenever the situation seems favorable for action.

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1. The masses in urban centers, particularly in Tehran, would support any reform movement led by any recognized leader bold enough to declare himself.
- II. The Shah's inability to make real progress toward reform is constantly eroding popular respect for the monarchy.
 - A. Despite increasing oil revenues which reached 230 million in 1957, the masses see no immediate benefits for them.
- III. Iran is concerned over deteriorating relations with Iraq.
 - A. Iraq is inciting the Kurds in Iran to revolt.
 1. Iraq is planning to support an uprising among Iranian Kurds when the fall harvest in northwestern Iran is completed. There are an estimated 500,000 Kurds in Iran; 300,000 in Iraq; 1,500,000 in Turkey; 250,000 in Syria; perhaps 50,000 in the USSR.
 2. Iraq has invited Kurdish leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani to return to Iraq from the USSR, where he fled in 1946 after leading uprisings in Iraq from 1943-1945 and in Iran 1945-1946. Barzani is expected to arrive in Iraq on 22 September.
 3. Iran fears a resumption of his influence on Iranian Kurdish Nationalism.
 4. The Iraq radio has called on Iranian Kurds to revolt against the Shah.